**"Evaluation of the green belts programme"**

138. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what percentage of land has been covered under social forestry programmes in the country;

(b) whether there has been an evaluation of the green belts programme in the country;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) if not, what steps are likely to be taken to enlarge the scope of green belts programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SMT. MANEKA GANDHI): (a) In the Sixth Plan period (1980-85) about 4.65 million hectares of area was covered under the Afforestation Programme, including Social Forestry. During the first four years of the Seventh Plan, i.e. 1985-86 to 1988-89, 7.14 million hectares have been covered. The expected area coverage during the Seventh Plan period (1985—90) is about 9.0 million hectares.

(b) and (c) Under the Social Forestry Programme, activities for developing green belts in and around urban areas are already being implemented by the State level agencies. A country-wide evaluation of these activities has not been carried out so far.

(d) The Social Forestry Programme has been enlarged substantially during the Seventh Plan period and this trend is expected to continue.

**Reconsideration of setting up of atomic power stations in the country**

139. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal for reconsideration with regard to setting up of atomic power stations in view of the persistent agitation by the people, environmentalists and others about the hazards involved in it;

(b) if so, what alternative plans are envisaged for meeting the power needs in the country; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative what definite steps would be taken to meet the objection of the environmentalists and others?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Nuclear Power Plants are environmentally benign during normal operations. Adequate engineered safety features are provided to minimis to a very low level the risk of a serious accident, and also mitigate the consequences in the unlikely event of an occurrnce. The steps taken towards safety and environmental protection include the following:

(i) Continuous review and upgradation of safety features to internationally accepted levels to achieve improved levels of safety.

(ii) Obtaining clearances on safety and environmental questions from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and Ministry of Environment and Forests.

(iii) Reviw of safety aspects by the AERB at all stages in setting up the Plants and their operation and complying with the limits stipulated by AERB.

(iv) As a matter of abundant caution working out the off-site emergency plans for all nuclear power plants and their review by State/National Emergency Response Committees set up by the Government.

(v) Intensifying efforts on development of technology for ultimate disposal of the relatively small quan-

tities of high level wastes from nuclear fuel cycle activities.

(vi) Launchng of public awareness programmes to inform the public about nuclear power in general and safety and environmental protection measures in particular.

**Implementation of Abid Hussain Committee's recommendation on CSIR Laboratories**

140. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to implement Abid Hussain Committee's recommendations with regard to CSIR laboratories;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for shelving the report; and

(d) what are the major thrusts of the recommendations of the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) The recommendations of the Abid Hussain Committee with regard to the CSIR laboratories have been implemented as finally accepted and approved by CSIR Society in the light of the observations made by SAC-PM thereon.

(b) These recommendations pertained to:

*Restructurig of laboratories.

*Performance review of selected laboratories.

*Re-naming of Regional Research Laboratories.

*Transfer of some laboratories to user Government Departments/ Ministries/Departments.

*Divesting of Field/Extension/Regional Centres of laboratories.

*Merger of two laboratories.

*Management and evaluation structures.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The major thrust of the recommendations was to restructure the CSIR and its laboratories to enable greater participation of user Government departments/Agencies and potential clients in policy formulation, idendification/formulation of R&D programmes, project management and funding etc. and also to give the laboratories the adequate autonomy and flexibility of operations to turn out more user responsive and market oriented research results.

**Oil exploration at Dakshin Gangotri in Antarctica**

141. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that oil exploration will be taken up at Dakshin Gangotri in Antarctica;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether some preliminary studies have been conducted there; and

(d) if so, whether these indicate commecrcial possibilities of oil production in the area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) to (d) Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) has associated its Geo-Scientists in the 3rd, 4th and 6th Scientific Expeditions to carry out studies in Dakshin Gangotri area for possible hydrocarbon accumulation. The information so far collected in this area is not yet sufficient for a decision on undertaking oil exploration.